

A DISCOURSE of the Usefulness, Antiquity
and Dedications of CHURCHES. N^o 8

BEING THE FIRST
S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D in
St. GEORGE's CHAPPEL
IN GREAT
Y A R M O U T H,

On the SUNDAY immediately after its
C O N S E C R A T I O N,
December 11th. MDCCXV.

By WILLIAM L Y N G, M. A. *K*

And Publish'd at the Request of the CORPORATION.

Peritura Troja perdidit primum Deos.

C A M B R I D G E:

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Decemb. 27th. 1715.

Order'd that the present *Church-Wardens*, Mr. *Alderman Pacy*, and Mr. *Brown*, Senior, be desired to wait upon Mr. *Lyng*, and return him the Thanks of this Houle, for his Sermon Preach'd at St. *George's* Chappel, the first Sunday after the Consecration of the said Chappel, and that they desire him to Print the same.



T U R N E R.



To the RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
GEORGE ENGLAND, Esq;
MAYOR,

And the other JUSTICES, ALDER-
MEN, and Common COUNCIL
of Great YARMOUTH.

AND TO
RICHARD FERRIER, Esq;

And the rest of the GENTLEMEN deputed by
the ASSEMBLY, to take the Oversight and
Direction of all Matters any way relating to the
Building and Ornament of the CHAPPEL.

GENTLEMEN,

I Inscribe this Discourse to your Names, because at
your Request it comes Abroad. You may please to
remember, that upon some other Occasions, I have
not been forward to appear in Public: For (whatever
Construction may be put upon it) such I declare to be
the diffidence of my private Judgment, in Cases of un-
common difficulty, as to stand in aw of those who see
a great deal farther than my self.

But

But forasmuch as, no Body can deny, that many Things are done unto this Community by your singular Wisdom and Management, not only by your circumspect Administration of Civil Justice, which leaves Offenders without excuse, but by your daily care for the propagation of Christianity, and studying in particular to graft in the Minds of every poor Creature under your Government the saving Graces of the Gospel, of which the Erection of a New Church or Chappel is a copious Demonstration. And that there are other indubitable Testimonials of this your Zeal for Religion, in the way which some Men call Heresy, as your stanch adherence at this time of Day to the Protestant Interest, your utmost Satisfaction in the Limitation of the Crown, and your late generous Entertainment of His Majesty's Forces, thrown upon our Coast by stress of Weather, in their Voyage to Scotland, for the security of these Blessings to future Generations; upon all which Considerations, I am obliged to depart from my natural Inclinations, and, to promote the like laudable Conduct in others, submit entirely to your Order,

Who, am in all Christian Offices,

Jan. 9. 1715.

Your most Faithful and

Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM LYNCH.

LUKE

LUKE VII. latter part of 4. & 5th vers.

*He was worthy for whom he shou'd do
this, for he loveth our Nation; and
hath built us a Synagogue.*

UPON our Lord's taking on him the Ministerial Function, such were the marvellous Works done by him upon Men's Bodies, as not only making good their natural Imperfections, but (to the evidence of Sense) healing all their Diseases and Infirmities, without any use of Medicaments or Physical Operations; that his Fame rang throughout *Syria* and the Regions round about, that at Home, and in his own Country, where People (if any where) fall short of Honour, great multitudes out of *Galilee*, *Decapolis*, *Jerusalem*, and *Judæa*, and from beyond *Jordan*, struck with the Admiration of his Cures, follow'd after him wherever he went.

The News of these surprizing Abilities, upon his going to *Capernaum*, prevail'd with an Officer of the *Roman Army*, who at that interim had a favorite Servant Sick of the Palsey, to send to him to come and heal him. And whatever was his Authority in the City, whither he held a Garrison there, or whatever was the Cause and Reason of his Influence, the great Men of the Town were employ'd in the Message, he sent unto him the Elders of the *Jews*, beseeching Him that he would come and heal his Servant.

B

And

And what was the prime Motive whereon their great Hope of Success was founded? Not his known Skill in War or any notable Action of the Field, nor his regular and strict Discipline within their Walls, nor his care of their *Rights and Properties*, or the security of their *Civil Peace*; not a syllable of all these (tho' every one of them popular Heads of Commendation, and very taking Arguments with Mankind) had any place in their Address.

What they apprehended most conducive to his Honour, and wou'd most acceptably recommend him to our Lord; what was it but his liberal Contribution to the *Religion that Christ himself profess'd*; what but his building a *House of Prayer* at his proper Cost and Charges, to which the *Jews* daily resorting, might unanimously confess their Sins to God, implore his Assistance and Protection, and thank him for all his Mercies; every one of them Doctrines of Nature as well as Revelation. They came to *Jesus*, and instantly besought him, saying, *He was worthy that he shou'd do this for him, for he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue.*

To speak with some Agreement to our present Circumstance, I have prepared to shew,

1st. That the Building of Houses, for *Holy and Religious* Uses, is extremely acceptable both to God and Man. I don't say it is *meritorious*, or believe it an act of such a Nature, as Alone and without a Life of Piety will make us Darlings of Heaven and Earth: But my meaning is, (and I think I speak the Mind of the Evangelist) that such as out of an *honest Heart*, and with an Eye to the *Glory of God*, are careful to procure Places of divine Worship (which necessarily suppose a suitable Endowment) for the Convenience, Ease,

Ease, and Benefit of such as make Profession of Religion, are morally secure of the Good Will of Men; and not only so, but in all rational Presumption over and above possess'd of a good Foundation against the Time to come. And this, I hope, will appear evident from what I have prepared to say, Concerning the *Usefulness, Antiquity and Dedications* of Places *so set a part*.

All *religious Assemblies* (as well as others) are made up of Men of different Views, Capacities and Inclinations, and generally speaking, are no less diverse, as to Degrees of Knowledge and Understanding in Matters that appertain to Godliness: And the main Business of such Assemblies, being to praise God for Mercies received, to beg at his Hands all Things needful for Soul and Body, and with meek Heart and due Reverence to hear and receive his Holy Word; I dare say no Body will deny, but that Men's Understandings may be much better inform'd, and their Hearts more affectionately mov'd in the public exercise of these Duties than in their secret Chambers and Retirements: Not that the like Pious Duties perform'd in our *Families and Private Closets* are not acceptable and rewardable of *our Father which is in Heaven*; Private Piety, Closet Devotion, and all inward Fervor of Soul and Spirit are in *his sight of great Price*, when not used in Contempt or a studied Neglect of *public Worship*. But that which I affirm is, that to pray to God in Publick, whether it be to supply our Necessities, to rescue us from impending Evils, or to return a *Sacrifice of Praise* for great and manifold Mercies, is much more conducive to Edification (I mean the Enlightening of our Understandings and Heightening our own and Bretheren's

B 2 Zeal,

Zeal, than a regular discharge of the same Duties however qualify'd elsewhere: For when we publicly appear before God, which of all his *Attributes* is not more capable of Propagation than in private Closets and Retirements? If we meet to give him Thanks for Blessings receiv'd, we declare his *Sovereignty and Dominion*, and say, that he is *Lord of Heaven and Earth*. If we confess our Sins, and from the Bottom of our Hearts bewail the Miscarriages of our Lives, at the same time we own both his *Justice* and his *Mercy*, we believe that he has a *power to kill and to make alive*, and yet *not willing that any of his Creatures shou'd perish*.

If we intercede with him in behalf of our *Brethren*, and by such Mediation do what in us lie to procure or conciliate his Grace and Favour, whither it be for their deliverance from present or future Evils, or for a quiet and lasting Possession of their *Rights and Properties*; at the same time we avouch his *Truth and Faithfulness*, and say in effect he'll never refuse to accept with a chearful Countenance, *the Golden Vials of Odours, the Prayers of his Saints*, Rev. 5.9.

And because no Body, rationally speaking, wou'd make any *being* the *object* of their *Devotion*, but who knows our Necessities, and is perfectly well acquainted with our several and respective Circumstances; by this our public Service we openly testify his *Omniscience and Omnipresence*, say he is every where, and in every place, and privy to all our Thoughts. And at this rate we contribute more to the *honour and glory of God*, in places set apart to divine Worship, than we can do in our secret Chambers, and convince our weak Brethren that *God is amongst us of a Truth*.

2dly, As our understandings are more enlightn'd, or at least capacitated to acquire a greater measure of Knowledge, by worshiping God in *Churches and Houses called by his Name*, than in Closets or Retirements: upon the same principle, our Zeal and Affections are by so doing rais'd to a higher pitch, and made more acceptable to God.

Churches as well as *Synagogues* are *Memorials* of God's presence; these are Places where he communicates himself with Men to bless them. Now tho' He be every where and in every place, yet the Consideration of his *immediate* presence, will naturally guard our hearts from roving or straying from what we are about, and over and above (if we are not past feeling) possess us with an uncommon *Aw and Veneration*. As we are afraid to commit notorious Sins, while we think the *Eye of God* is upon us: by parity of Reason, so long as we believe our selves in his immediate Presence, all the Faculties of our Souls and Bodies will be more than ordinary dispos'd to please him.

And what think you of the benefits of *Communion*? will not a view of the solemn Postures and Gestures of the *Brethren* contribute very much to an intense and lasting Devotion of such religious Services? say, if the lifting up of Peoples Hands and Eyes to *Heaven*, if *falling down upon their Knees, smiting their Breasts*, and *uncovering their Heads*, do not work uncommonly upon our Minds, and both beget and preserve such degrees of Love and Confidence, as otherwise had been Cold and Languid, without either Life or Spirit?

3dly, As People are more capacitated to ensure the benefits of *Edification*, that is to arrive to a greater Know-

Knowledge of God, and be more affectionately mov'd to praise him, in Houses dedicated to his honour, than in Places where *his Name is not recorded*: so are they encouraged to hope their service will be better accepted, and more effectual a great deal, to procure all needful Blessings at God's hands, by means of the Consent and Unanimity of the Numbers: For if the *Prayer* of one *faithful Man*, when *fervently* offer'd up to God in private, *availeth much*, there is all the reason in the World to believe, that the like zealous Addresses of an *Assembly*, or *Congregation*, will be very graciously received.

Antiquity.

I appeal to the common Reason of Mankind, and to that Light which has guided the several Generations of Men, from the beginning of the *Creation*, in confirmation of the truth before us. *Moses* (if I take him right) by an *Altar* in those Days, meant neither more or less than we do by an Oratory, or Place of Prayer. *Gen. 28. 18.* And *by pouring Oil upon it*: what but the same thing in effect which is done by us, in the *Consecration* of any *Holy Place*? Now upon what other principle did *Noah*, after his coming out of the *Ark*, erect an Altar for himself and Family; but upon that eternal Reason which told him, that God was to be worship'd? His consecrating an *Altar* for the Service of God, being the first memorable Act mention'd by *Moses*, *Gen. 8. 20.* after his deliverance from the Flood of Waters, is a violent presumption, that God was worship'd in the *Old World* after the same manner.

For in the *Antediluvian* Antiquities we have an account of an universal decay of Piety, and that in the days of *Enoch*, without any known direction from above, they sate up a Reformation and *began to call upon the Name of the Lord*; and what can be the mean-

meaning of all this? But that they built them *Temples* and *Altars*, and set apart some of the wiser sort to be *Priests* and *Teachers*, and *Instructors* of others, in the more difficult Branches of *Nature's Law*.

We have all the reason imaginable for such a persuasion, because the *Post-Diluvians*, or the Generations after the Flood, did the same thing without any other guide. And such an universal practice might be convey'd downward to all the Idolatrous Nations of the Earth. However, such in the Heathen World as were Masters of Learning, and acquainted with Books, had both seen and read the History of *Moses*. A Pagan Writer of the Life of *Pythagoras* says, that he took all his *Philosophy* out of it. And *Tertullian*, that the *Poets* and *Philosophers* stole their Learning from him; which at least must argue, that they were so pleased with his Writings, as to insert abundance of his Rites and Customs, as well as Moral Duties. into their Works; and among others, this in all presumption, of setting Places apart for Divine Worship, as apprehending it highly Laudable and Consonant to *Nature's Law*: And (if I am not mistaken) from hence follow'd all that Veneration and Respect to *Holy Places*, of whatever *Canton* in the Heathen World; as well as the Severe Punishments purposely devised to prevent *Sacrilege*. For by a Law of the *Phocian's* Criminals of this Kind were either to be thrown down a Precipice, or drown'd in the Sea, or burnt at a Stake. And upon no other principle *Darius the Persian*, upon the *Jews* Consecration of their *Temple*, confirm'd it with a Curse, to such as shou'd sacrilegiously invade it. *Ezra*. 6. 11, 12. *I have made a Decree, that whosoever shall alter this sentence, the wood shall be pulled down from his house, and shall be set up, and he shall be hanged thereon,*

Hermippus
in *Joseph.*
Cont. Ap.
lib. 1. Apol.
cap. 47.

Euseb. de
prepar. p.
392. Edit.
Mogunt.

thereon, and his house shall be made a dunghil for this. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there, destroy all Kings and People that put their hands to alter, and destroy this house of God, which is at Jerusalem. I 'Darius have made a Decree, let it be done with speed.

What made the Heathen World thus full of respect to Temples of all denominations, was (with submission) the *Athenian* Principle, which* moved them to erect an *Altar to the unknown God*. For they being wholly immers'd in *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*, cou'd not tell but that there might be a God better able to protect them than their own. And if he were any where to be found, they confidently believed it must be at an *Altar* or House of religious *Worship*. And therefore they most an end pay'd a distinguishing respect to such sacred Structures, wherever their Arms prevail'd: and if in such a Scrutiny they had carefully avoided all *Superstition* and *Idolatry*, without question they had *pleased God*, and with the Posterities of *Noah* gone to their graves in peace.

For when God thought fit to take into his immediate Care that handful of Men, which go by the Name of *Hebrews* or *Israelites*, and enter'd into Covenant with them, that upon such and such terms *he would be their God and they should be his people*, to the more effectual making good the Articles on their part, his first advice was that they shou'd build him a *Sanctuary*, or an House for him to dwell in. And in that moveable *Tabernacle*, all the whole forty years of their travel to *Canaan*, they waited upon God according to his order and direction.

And such Places of *Publick-Worship* God all along provided for that people (excepting their 70 years of Bondage) as long as their Constitution lasted. His
House

House at *Shiloh* stood till the death of *Eli*, or about 367 years. Those at *Nob* and *Gibeah* about 157 years, and the Temple at *Jerusalem*, till *Titus* sacked the City. To say nothing of their *Synagogues* which were to their Temple, what our Parish Churches are to a Cathedral; nor yet of their upper Rooms, which we are told had been in use from *Daniel's* days.

Maimonides de Templi edificio.

Every body must say, and are forward to own, that all these religious Houses answer'd the ends of their erection, and that so long as that People had the Lord for their God; in them they were sure to have their wants reliev'd.

Bp Fearson's lect. upon the Acts.

For it was an uncontested Tradition amongst the Jews, that the ground particularly on which the Temple stood, God had made sacred from the beginning of the Creation; that there *David* and *Solomon* built an Altar, namely on *Mount Moriah*, on the threshing floor of *Araunah the Jebusite*, and there *Abraham* design'd to have sacrificed his Son *Isaac*, and there *Noah* built his Altar when he went a shore from the Ark. And not only so, but there also *Cain* and *Abel* sacrific'd, and before them, their Father as soon as he was made, and that *Adam* himself, upon that very spot receiv'd his first Being and Existence.

Ibid. Cap. 2. interprete ludov. de Compiegne de veil.

But in our days some people are not willing to own a like necessity of such consecrated Houses, for the administration of religious offices. These tell us indeed it was praise worthy, and truly religious for such as were Members of the Jewish Church, to appropriate Houses to the God of Israel, because that Nation was expressly commanded so to do; but since the Wall of Partition is broken down, no people (say they) are under the like tye and obligation: And for

Assembly of Divines upon Gen. 18. v. 18.

C

a proof

a proof of all this, the words of our Lord to the *Woman of Samaria* are sure to be alledg'd, *John* 4. 21. *Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father.* The genuine sense and meaning of which Words, I think, is generally believ'd to be, that God will no longer bear with the *Idolatries* of the *Heathens*, nor with the *Hipocrisies* of his ancient Church, but make choice of a new set of Men, that shall be *zealous of good Works*. Whereas the Men I am speaking of will have our *Savior's* meaning to be, that now under the *Gospel* God has done with *Dedications*, and as to the performance of External Duties leaves every body to themselves: That now, while he calls upon all Men every where to repent, he suffers them to walk on in their own ways, (that is to say) in point of respect to any set and stated methods of Devotion: That he ties no Man to this or that visible *Communion*, but accepts all acts of Worship, perform'd in secret Chambers and Apartments, altogether as well as in *Temples* and *Churches* consecrated to his Honour, by an actual renunciation of our private Right. All which is so plain a contradiction to the known Conduct of our Lord, as nothing can be more.

Ubi supra.

For the very first public Act he did was to provide for such, as in time shou'd believe in his Name, a place of public meeting for the Service of God. At his first going to *Jerusalem*, he cast such as bought and sold out of the Temple, he overthrew the Tables of the *Money Changers*, and the Seats of them that sold Doves, saying, my House shall be called a House of prayer unto all Nations. Surely this was not done in favor of the Jews.

Jews, who were scatter'd abroad in the several Kingdoms and Countries of the Earth, because he who came to destroy the Rites and Customs that *Moses* had made, can't rationally be suppos'd (when he was ready to be offer'd) to perpetuate what he came to abrogate; and therefore our *Lord's* prime meaning and design in this act was, that such as afterward shou'd embrace his Gospel might have a place for public worship, as well as the Church that was before them.

I dare say, no body cou'd express a more honorable respect for Houses set apart for public Prayer than himself, *John* 18. 20. when the High Priest asked him, what was the Doctrine which he taught, *Jesus* answer'd, *I spake openly to the World; I ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.* And what was his prime end (think you) in all this? What, was it out of any legal principle? that can't be; for then he wou'd never have aggravated the crying Sins of the *Scribes and Pharises*, nor yet have told them, in a very doleful accent, of the utter ruin and Destruction of their City, *Luke* 19. 43, 44. But his meaning was, that the will of God in the Salvation of Mankind is most advantageously to be learn'd and understood by every Body, in places set apart to holy uses; and the *Apostles* took this hint, and, after our *Lord's* assumption into Heaven, taught daily in their *Synagogues*, proving *Jesus to be the Christ*. The Number of Christians at first were very few, for *St. Luke* remembers but a 120 at their return from the Mount of Olives: But so mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed, that before *St. Paul* went out of the World, Christians had Churches of their own, places

Matth.

so peculiarly appropriated to Divine Service, that none of the common offices of life might be done in them, and the many and long Intervals of *Persecution* wherein Christians were so highly favour'd of the Civil Powers, as to be admitted to places of public trust, and to be honoured with Offices of great distinction in the Imperial Court, are a violent presumption of their continuance.

As the *dispersed Jews* built them *Synagogues* in every City, wherein they were allowed to inhabit: So there's all the reason in the World to believe, that *Christians* made like Provision for themselves, whenever such as sat at the Helm gave them any Favour or Encouragement. Not to make any Inferences from the Christian Assemblies in *Bythinia* under *Trajan's* Reign, nor yet of those stated Places for the Service of God on *Sundays*, which prevailed in City and Country in less than 30 Years after, mention'd by *Justin Martyr*; The great *Ecclesiastical Historian* of our Affairs for the first 300 Years tells us, that in the 19 Year of *Dioclesian*, by public Authority and in form of Law, an Edict was given out, ἐκκλησιῶν ἑδάφος φέγειν, that all Churches shou'd be laid in Ashes. A cogent Evidence that from the beginning Christians had Places appropriated to the public Worship of God.

Euseb. E.
H. lib. 8.
cap. 2.

The Con-
secration of
Churches.

And (with Submission to better Judges) to me it is highly credible, that such Holy Houses as Christians built and set apart for religious Worship by Permission of *Heathen Powers*, were dedicated to Almighty God by some public Form, tho' such *Dedications* be not mention'd in our *Histories*. And this I take leave to say, *First*, because such *Hallow*

ing of Temples was commonly practis'd in those infidel Countries, by whose favour and consent Christians were after allow'd to build. And Secondly, because those Christian Churches which *Dioclesian* rais'd, were endowed with Houses, Lands and Gardens, and they so settled for the Minister's Maintenance, as never to be alienated without incurring the Guilt of *Sacrilege*. Thirdly, because after the Death of the Tyrant *Maximinus* the last avow'd Enemy of Christ's Kingdom, the named Historian tells us, their Churches were repair'd and rais'd to an immense height, and made more splendid than those that were pulled down; and then adds, That *Festival* Dedications and Consecrations of *Oratories* so erected filled the Peoples Hearts with incredible Joy and all-well-pleasing. And if there had been any the least particle of *Superstition* or *Idolatry* in such their Consecrations, those Venerable and Holy Bishops who assisted at the Dedications of the Churches of *Jerusalem* and *Tyre*, and who knew very well the Circumstances of their demolish'd Churches as to this particular, wou'd in all presumption have entred their protest against this Ceremony, which being not done by a *Synod of Fathers*, whose Piety, at this vast distance, rings thro' all the World, is in reason conviction sufficient, that Christians from the beginning, upon consideration of the Usefulness of such religious Houses to all the Ends of Edification, have all along for their better security, by Prayers and Thanksgivings, and other like public Exercises of Devotion, resign'd their Right and Title to them, and by *Livery and Seisin* put them into the Possession of Almighty God.

De vita
Constant.
lib. 2. ca.
29.

Can. Apo
72.

Euseb. 10
2. 3.

Soc. lib.
cap. 33.

But

But the Argument will have some new Degrees of Strength, if it shall appear, that this same practice of Consecrating religious Houses unto God obtain'd from the beginning in this our Kingdom of Great Britain. And if our Histories acquaint us, that Persecution was Comparatively very little till the 19th of *Diocletian's Reign*. That the *British Wars* before *King Lucius* were begun and carried on upon Civil Interests, without any relation to Religion; that many of our then *infidel Kings* were uncommonly Courteous and Respective to the *Christians*; I don't say so far led, as in *their* favour to alter the Religion of our Country; but that they were won and charm'd into such opinion of their Virtues, by their inoffensive Carriage and Behaviour; as to give them all the Countenance that Men cou'd rationally desire; such as admitting them to *Trusts and Posts of Honour*, placing them in their *Guards and Garrisons*, and in the main Bodies of their Armies: Is it to be suppos'd that Men of such exemplary Lives and Conversations, and in so great reckoning with the then *Heathen Powers*, did not imitate their *Catholic Brethren* abroad?

That our *Britons* in particular were not as forward to make Provision for God's Worship as any other Kingdoms of the *Roman Empire*; If *St. Paul* had any Hand in the Conversion of this *Island* (as Men of Name affirm) all diffidence as to this particular ought to be laid aside, because in all his Plantations of Christians He kept to one and the same Rule, (*the same thing ordain I in all Churches.*) But what our *British Christians* did, when under Heathen Powers, we may (I think) safely infer from the Carriage

*Beale lib. 1.
cap. 3. &
4.*

*Antiq.
Cant. pag.
3.*

*Euseb. H.
lib. 8. 6.*

riage of our Kings towards them, when they came over to the Faith.

Our *first Christian King* upon Record was *Lucius*, and He upon his Conversion built and endowed a great many Churches, and by all the security that cou'd be made by Writings or otherwise, He relinquish'd his Right and Title to them. And what was all this but a Branch of *Dedication*, whereby we divest our selves of any claim or interest in Things we set a part to God? And for as much as after *Lucius*, the Faith of *Christ* (if we except the *Dioclesian Persecution*) continued in safety, till the *Arrian Heresy* overflow'd it's Banks, and forc'd our Ancestors upon Rocks and Shelves, that prov'd fatal to them and their Posterities: what Reason can be given why succeeding Kings, as well as *Constantine*, under a good Conjuncture might not imitate their great Leader, and either build New, or repair their antient Churches, that had been ruined by that bloody Tyrant; either of which has such an Air of Credit, as is usually given to Ecclesiastical Historians: So that besides the other Evidences named, we have the practice of our ancient *Britains* to warrant our Ceremony of Consecration.

Concil. S.
H. Spelm.
Norm. I. p.
33.

Bed. Hist.
lib. 1. cap.
8.

Upon these Views (not materially differing from that of the *Centurion*, or the *Catholic Church*) the Wisdom of *this Ancient Corporation* being forward to remove from such as are under their Charge, every apparent hindrance to their Duty in God's Service, such as the Pleas of Distance, Infirmary, and old Age, as well as the Inconveniences of Throngs and Crowds, which in the public Assemblies were thought to deprive People (naturally well disposed) of the benefit

benefit of our Prayers and Sermons: I say the Wisdom of such as bear rule amongst us, to silence the murmurs, and calm the disquiets of this Nature, by the Assistance of God's good Spirit, and the Concurrence of the Inhabitants, without any *Royal* aid or considerable Contribution from abroad, (and I think I may say, to the Admiration of such as are round about us) hath blessed us with this stately Structure, which not only upon Reasons of Convenience and Accommodation, but in point of Beauty and Magnificence is marvelous in our Eyes. A pile that in every of these respects, without vanity, may be said to outshine the Sanctuaries of our Country, and deservedly bear Consideration with the the *new Erections* of our *regal City*.

And for as much as a mere Intention or Resolution of building an *House for God*, will always have his good liking and approbation (as appears in King *David's Case*): so the actual Raising, Finishing, and Fitting up such a convenient structure, for the benefit of piously disposed *Christians* at a great Expence of Treasure, and with much weariness to the Flesh, must, in the Nature of Things, *secure a good Foundation against the time to come*, and encourage such Persons or Bodies of Men, as have had any share or province in this Undertaking, that God will *prosper their Handy-work*, and give a Blessing to their Labours: That those in particular, who were the prime Projectors, and for their Abilities and Penetration fave singled out to inspect the Operation, and Conduct the order and outward Management of the Work, may, without any opinion of *merit* in a religious Sense, besides God's Blessing upon themselves and

and Families, expect to live in the Minds of all good Men, and as long as *Registers* continue in the World, with the *Centurion* before us, have their Names transmitted to late Posterities. In a word, no body I persuade my self makes Question, but that the diffusive Grace of God's good Spirit, who never forgets our *labour that proceeds of love*, like the holy anointing Oyl upon *Aaron's Head* will run down to the Beard, and be convey'd to the Skirts, or the most inferiour Members of the Body : That all Ranks, Orders and Degrees of Men amongst us, will find their accounts in it, and see cause to admire the benignity and loving Kindness of God, who hath done so great Things for us.

The sum of the whole Argument is, that erecting and setting a part *Houses* or *Churches* for Divine Service, is extreamly acceptable to God and Man, as answering all the Ends of *Edification*. That by the Light of Nature, from the first beginning of Things, not only the *post* but *antediluvian World*, have upon the same Views provided for their public *Worship*. That Almighty God, in that community under his peculiar care, gave expresse Command for the building of a *Tabernacle*, and a standing Temple upon the Settlement of its Constitution. That our Lord, his *Apostles*, and *their Successors*, made no alteration in this Point, but, by their Approbation and Example, convey'd their practice to all succeeding Bodies of *Christians* ; who when not hindred by Force, or Persecution, have all along hallow'd their Places of Assembling, and by *Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks*, recommend them

John 10.
22, 23.
Mark 19.
15.

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to God's Care, and put them into his Possession. And which ought in a particular manner to be remembered by us, that this Custom of setting apart Places for God's Honour, and the Edification of his People, by the pious Offices now named, has from the Apostolical Age downward, been preserv'd without any material Change, and Alteration in this our Kingdom of Great Britain, so that we have common reason, the good liking of God, and his Son Christ, as well as the approbation of the Church Catholic, to warrant the Consecration of this our newly erected Sanctuary.

Upon all which Considerations, acting like Men and Christians, we cannot but infer, that such a behaviour towards *Holy Houses* is expected from us as may entitle us to all the Benefits intended by them. And what that is, I shall digest into these Particulars which follow.

I. That we be careful upon all Occasions, when not hinder'd by our Callings, or any other legal Warrent, to frequent God's Service in these Houses; for principally for your good *daily Morning and Evening Prayers*, are forever to be perform'd both here as well as in the *Mother Church*. And to perswade Men to come into his Courts, and fall down before his Footstool, one might think there needed no great Argument. For as *Jordan and Siloam* had, by God's blessing, such a fanative Virtue in them, as to cure all their bodily Distempers and Infirmities that were commission'd to wash there; so a far greater Portion of Benediction is to be had in these *Holy Houses*.

if Men are not wanting to themselves) such as pardon of Sin, and the Conduct of God's good Spirit. And therefore seeing all possible care is taken to remove the old Hindrances of Peoples going to Church: If such as were *intemperately zealous* for *New Chappel*, and continually upon the complaining Key for lack of Means, and Opportunities of doing their Duty in God's way, if these in particular shall but by fits and starts resort hither, and be as neutral as some other cold and indifferent Worshippers, such a neglect in them will be inexcusable. If our Lord's Judgment be of any weight in the Case, *it were better that a Milstone were hang'd about their Neck, and they drown'd in the midst of the Sea.* For by such a flagrant Scandal the Enemies of the Lord may be tempted to Blaspheme, or by God's prospering the Rebel Forces in the *North*, the *Light of Israel* may be put out, and the *Breath of our Nostrils* taken from us; and then Armies of *Idolaters*, no less formidable than were the *Hunns* of *Hollinshead* and in the same Quarter, may without Number be ^{93.} poured in upon us, such as will not stick to profane the *Houses of God in the Land*, and (if possible) force even in this *Beauty of Holiness* to worship *all the Hosts of Heaven.*

II. A Second thing to secure to us the benefits of *Holy Houses*, is Reverence, and that is of two kinds, the relating to the Place, the other to the external offices. Of the first sort are all those Signs and Ceremonials of Honour, which by the consent and custom of our Country, we give to God in Houses dedicated to his Service. The custom of the *Jews* was

to go barefoot into the Temple, ours to uncover the head. And why not *We* pull off our Hats in the *House of God*, as well as *They* pluck'd off their Shoes? Is not God a like present with *us* in our Holy Places, as he was with *that* people in their Temples and Synagogues? Has not he promis'd the Holy Ghost to be with us *to the end of the World*? And if, upon our Lord's warrant, *He will be in the midst of us*, where two or three are gather'd together in his Name, or by his Authority, what question can be made of his presence in Places consecrated to his Service?

But perhaps it will be said, we over do in this point, in being bare in *Churches*, in the Intervals of Divine Worship, when people see no reason to believe God present. And where is the Superstition in this particular? Uncovering our Heads in the vacations of God's Service is (I hope) no more Superstition, than our doing the same thing in the *King's Presence Chamber*, when we know his Majesty is not there; out of a singular Respect to immediate Interest, we pay the same Ceremony both to the One and the Other. *We give to God that which is God's, as well as unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's*; in the place where God's Honour dwells we give him the Honour of our Hats, and that is the least we can do if any Respect at all arises from immediate Right and Property.

But to reap the Benefits of Church Assemblies, we have said a Reverence is due to the outward Administration: For if the Public Service be flubber'd

over, without Form or Comeliness, I mean without any regard to our *Rubric*, and the Orders of our *Church*, we shall for certain pall the Devotions of some, and lay a *Stumbling-block* before the Feet of others; either of which will greatly prejudice our Interest in the business of *Edification*, and cause us to fall short of the Advantages thereby expected.

In our Old Church we can't be so particular in some matters of this nature, as were to be wish'd; We can't read the *Second Service* at the *Altar*, as Law obliges, which really wou'd be scandal given, did not the Situation of our *Chancel* speak for us.

For why shou'd we run riot upon an Innocent Practice, without a necessitating Cause? However some Men in the last Age, merely out of prejudice and unguarded Zeal, were pleas'd to brand it with *Popery and Superstition*, assure your Selves there is no Superstition in it; it was always so among the Primitive Christians. And indeed, where shou'd the *Communion Service* be read, but at the *Communion Table*? We do it when there is no Communion, to encourage a frequent use of the Sacrament of the Altar, and to shew how forward we are to recover its ancient esteem and value, if Communicants were not wanting: And therefore it is to be hoped, we will not disparage this branch of our Administration, by a careless neglect of what our Christian Ancestors intended for a common Good.

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Sparrow
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III. To advance such a decent and comely Order in public Assemblies as is worthy of God, I have said, that constant Resort to them, Testimonials of Reverence in them, with a regular performance of the several Offices of Divine Service, are of some signification to procure the benefits of Communion: But to an entire and an indefeasible possession of them, the Considerations named are not alone sufficient: For whatever we do, we must do it *with all our might, and all our strength*, with all the Affections of Soul and Body. *If we draw nigh to God with our lips, and our hearts be far from him: If we come into his courts to hear, or tell some new thing*, to reflect upon our Brethrens weakness, or wantonly interrupt our own, or their Devotions; we shall not only be very ungrateful to those good Men, who at an excessive Charge and Trouble have remov'd the hindrances of our Piety, but deceive our own Souls.

The primary Ends and Reasons of Churches, and the Service appointed are, to give God thanks for Blessings in possession, to intercede with Him for what we want, and for deliverance from what we have a just cause to fear. To learn our Duties from the *Stewards of his Mysteries*, and Covenant for our practice at the holy Altar.

And, *if we exalt God's Name in the Congregation, and praise him in the Assemblies of the Elders, if we lift up clean hands, without wrath and doubting, and receive the engrafted word, not merely as hearers, but doers of it*; and so distinguish our Lords Body from
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our daily Bread, as wisely to discern our Duty in the Covenant, we have all the security Revelation can give us, that we *shall want no manner of thing that is good*; and over and above, that when we are remov'd from God's Service, in these Houses of Lime and Stone, we shall be translated to the Choire above, and eternally give him glory in the Habitations *not made with hands, with the Spirits of just Men made perfect in the Heavens.*

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